

What is claimed is:

1. In a network system connecting a server and at least one node serving as a home terminal, a method for controlling a mobile agent comprising the following steps:

storing in said server traveling data indicating which nodes to travel;

sending from said server to said node a mobile agent containing said traveling data and distribution data formed from a program to be executed at said node and/or data to be used by said node;

loading and executing said program at said node to which said mobile agent is sent;

determining a node to be moved to next by reading said traveling data attached to said mobile agent; and

sending said mobile agent to a node determined by said node.

2. A method for controlling a mobile agent as described in claim 1 wherein said nodes to be traveled by said mobile agent are divided into a plurality of groups, and said distribution data is distributed to each of said plurality of groups.

3. A method for controlling a mobile agent as described in claim 2 wherein said groups are divided so that a group traveling time of each group is no greater than a predetermined time, where said group traveling time is a sum of times required to travel a single node.

4. A method for controlling a mobile agent as described in claim 2 wherein said groups are divided to form a predetermined number of groups by selecting nodes so that said group traveling times for said groups are uniform.

5. A method for controlling a mobile agent as described in claim 2 wherein said groups are divided to reduce communication costs between nodes.

6. A method for controlling a mobile agent as described in claim 2 wherein: two sets of said distribution data having identical contents except for said traveling data are sent to a group; traveling data of one distribution data is in an opposite sequence from traveling data of another distribution data; and traveling is completed when said two sets of said distribution data meet.

7. A method for controlling a mobile agent as described in claim 1 wherein when a fault in a node is discovered, fault information is stored in said server and said fault information is displayed to said display device.

8. A method for controlling a mobile agent as described in claim 7 wherein traveling data excluding said fault information stored in said server is added to said mobile agent.

9. A method for controlling a mobile agent as described in claim 1 wherein distribution is performed according to a schedule created beforehand.

10. A method for controlling a mobile agent as described in claim 1 wherein said traveling data is maintained and managed by editing said traveling data.

11. A method for controlling a mobile agent as described in claim 1 wherein: said node includes means for communicating by way of a base station as in mobile telephones and means for making transceiver connections to communicate with other nodes without going through said base stations; said plurality of nodes is divided into groups of nodes that can make transceiver connections with each other; when said transceiver connectable nodes communicate by way of transceiver connections and other nodes connect by way of said base stations, groups are divided so that each group contains at least two of said base stations.

12. A method for controlling a mobile agent as described in claim 11 wherein when a fault occurs at a base station capable of being connected to a node and communication to said server or nodes in other groups is not possible, an agent is sent by way of a transceiver connection to a node capable of connecting with a working base station, and said agent is sent from said connectable node to said server or another group.

13. A method for controlling a mobile agent as described in claim 12 wherein when a fault occurs at a base station, transceiver-connectable nodes are searched to find a node that can connect to a working base station.

14. In a server connected to at least one node serving as a traveling destination and executing a mobile agent, a method for controlling a mobile agent comprising the following steps:

predicting beforehand a traveling time needed for traveling based on traveling destination information and distribution data information;

dividing traveling destinations into a plurality of groups so that said traveling time is no greater than a predetermined value; and

distributing mobile agents to each of said groups.

15. A computer-readable recording medium holding a program for a method for controlling a mobile agent executed by a server connected to at least one node serving as a traveling destination and executing a mobile agent, said method comprising the following steps:

predicting beforehand a traveling time needed for traveling based on traveling destination information and distribution data information;

dividing traveling destinations into a plurality of groups so that said traveling time is no greater than a predetermined value; and

distributing mobile agents to each of said groups.

16. A mobile agent controlling apparatus connected to at least one node serving as a

traveling destination and executing a mobile agent comprising:

means for predicting beforehand a traveling time needed for traveling based on traveling destination information and distribution data information;

means for dividing traveling destinations into a plurality of groups so that said traveling time is no greater than a predetermined value; and

means for distributing mobile agents to each of said groups.